



Work on the project that will lead to the replacement of the 106-year-old railroad bridge over the Washougal River is currently in the permitting and design phase. Most of the construction is expected to take place starting in 2016.

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## Camas railroad bridge project is part of BNSF capital program

Rail upgrades were also recently completed in the local area

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A project that will lead to the replacement of the railroad bridge in Camas is part of a \$189 million capital program being led by BNSF Railway Company in Washington.

BNSF announced Friday that the 2015 projects will focus on rail capacity improvements and maintenance.

"This year's planned expansion and maintenance projects will help give BNSF the capacity flexibility it needs to support our customers' growing demands and connect Washington products to key markets," said Daryl Ness, BNSF general manager of operations in the northwest division.

The projects will include 1,011 miles of track surfacing and un-

dercutting work, and the replacement of nearly 50 miles of rail and close to 203,000 ties, as well as signal upgrades for federally mandated positive train control.

BNSF Spokesman Gus Melonas said some of this work was recently completed by crews in the Camas-Washougal area.

"Rail upgrades allow for trains to operate at the maximum speeds, which also will allow the trains to pass through the crossing areas more rapidly," he said. "By investing millions of dollars in our track, this allows for the optimum operations."

This year's capital program also includes funding for the continuation of efforts being made toward a \$10 million project that will replace the Washougal River railroad bridge in Camas. According to Melonas, permitting and right-of-way issues are currently being worked through, and preliminary construction work is expected to start this year.

"We're prepping," Melonas said.

"We are working on the pre-permitting, design stage. We expect by the end of the year we could begin some staging work — bringing in equipment and materials. Replacement will occur in 2016."

The main span of the bridge will be replaced with a new steel structure that has a wider clearance. New piers will be installed, and the bridge's foundation will be set deeper than it is now.

The Camas railroad bridge is part of a line that is more than 100 years old. Originally built in 1908, the 550 foot long railroad bridge runs above the Washougal River and parallels Southeast Sixth Avenue. Over the years, work has been done to improve and maintain the bridge, but it has never been replaced.

The Washougal River railroad bridge is crossed by up to 35 trains in a 24-hour period. Routes that pass through the area run local, national and international.